

News Release

U of M Crookston Secures 10-Year Accreditation, Blanket Approval for Online Degrees

By Krista Lemos, Judy Neppel on Friday, October 27, 2006CROOKSTON, MN (October 27, 2006) – It's official: the University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) has secured continued accreditation for the next 10 years, the maximum amount awarded, along with blanket approval for moving ahead with more online degrees. This paves the way for the Crookston campus to deliver two additional University of Minnesota applied science degrees online – one in business and the other in manufacturing management – beginning spring 2007.

"This is a significant milestone in our campus journey as we strategically move forward with providing access to world-renowned teaching and research and serving as a regional hub in northwestern Minnesota," UMC Chancellor Charles H. Casey said. "Continued full accreditation is affirmation of the high-quality education we provide, the integrity of our system processes and assessment and the confidence and enthusiasm with which we carry out our mission.

"It is also indicative of the strong and consistent support our campus receives from partners in the community, region and throughout the state."

This week the board of the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools forwarded its final stamp of approval to UMC, which has offered four-year degrees since 1993. As part of the accreditation process, peer evaluators visited the Crookston campus earlier this spring and made recommendations to the HLC board, which met and reviewed the findings earlier in October.

Along with the accreditation, HLC gave blanket approval for UMC to provide any of its traditionally offered degree programs online, as approved by the University of Minnesota Board of Regents. UMC was the first U of M campus to offer degrees via the Web and is the only campus in the University system to receive this blanket approval from HLC.

Expansion of online degrees also plays an important role in the University of Minnesota, Crookston vision and strategic positioning which calls for pursuing an aggressive growth strategy in selected areas of online programming. The campus looks to build on its reputation, infrastructure and talent to compete in this growing educational marketplace.

Online enrollment has increased by almost 20 percent this fall alone at UMC, which delivers some 40 courses via the Web in addition to the degree programs. Currently the campus delivers the bachelor of applied health online and will bring the four-year business and bachelor of manufacturing management programs online for spring 2007 enrollment.

In the HLC report, the evaluation team found evidence to support all criteria and standards as required by the commission and documented in UMC's Self-Study Report that was submitted in February 2006. Team members noted the following:

> The Crookston campus operates with sound planning and budget allocation processes and is well positioned financially to carry out its assigned mission of education, research and outreach.

> The campus is totally committed to student learning. From the incorporation of technology into every aspect of the teaching-learning process to providing quality co-curricular and extra-curricular activities outside the classroom to measuring the level of satisfaction experienced by users, the campus strives for, and documents, student academic achievement.

> The campus benefits from strong alliances throughout the region and state. Community leaders were eager to praise the campus' openness and responsiveness to local economic development and civic engagement needs.

UMC was evaluated on HLC standards in the following five areas: mission and integrity; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching; acquisition, discovery and application of knowledge; and engagement and service.

Institutional accreditation is a comprehensive review by a private, nongovernmental organization specifically created to review higher education institutions and programs for quality. The four University of Minnesota campuses are accredited separately at the institutional level by the Higher Learning Commission of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. UMC's last comprehensive visit was in 1995.

The University of Minnesota, Crookston (UMC) delivers more than 24 different undergraduate degree programs, including online options, in agriculture; arts, humanities and social sciences; business; math, science and technology; and natural resources. UMC is dedicated to helping students and the region aim higher, reach further, and dream big dreams. To learn more, visit www.UMCrookston.edu.

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